1: Roth--37 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 262, 609

"We let one of the natives see our ships through a good perspective glass, and he soon yielded to our solicitations to go on board the 'Recherche.' He went up the side with an air of confidence, and examined the inside of the ship with much attention. His looks were then directed chiefly to such objects as might serve for food. Led by the similitude in shape between two black swans on Cape Diemen and the geese of Guinea, which he saw on board, he asked for one, giving us to understand it was to eat. When he came opposite our hen-coops, he appeared struck with the beauty of a very large cock, which was presented to him; and on receiving it, he let us know that he would lose no time in broiling and eating it. After having remained on board more than half an hour, and been loaded with presents, he desired to return, and was immediately carried ashore. We had taken an ape on shore with us, which afforded much amusement to the savages; and one of the crew took a goat with him, which formed a subject of conversation for them a long time, and to which they occasionally spoke, saying, medi (sit down). [WEL: citing La Billardière, I, pp. 181-211; 1792]."

1: Roth--64 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 181, 262, 201

"Mr. Leigh says, the aborigines 'are peaceable towards those who use them well, but revengeful of injuries' (III. p. 242), and West (II. p. 89): 'They were cruel in their resentment, but not prone to violence; ... they were not ungrateful, especially for medical relief.... The English were seen by some friendly natives to draught the toad fish, which is poison, and by which several have perished; the natives, perceiving its preparation for food, endeavoured to show, by gestures, that it was not to be eaten, and exhibited its effects by the semblance of death.' La Billardière mentions the case of a native who expressed his gratitude for a cock given him by pointing to the bird on his shoulder (II. ch. x. p. 66)."

1: Roth--75 [2] (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 262, 771

"Concerning their rejection of certain kinds of food, Davies (p. 414) states, that 'Some tribes, or portions of tribes, will not eat the female wallaby, others will not eat the male: to what superstition this is attributable, I am ignorant. Others will not eat scaled fish; and it appeared to me, when at Flinders Island, that the western natives would not eat the smooth-shelled haliotis, though the easterns did.' Backhouse (p. 171) also informs us that some of the natives only eat the male wallaby, others only the female; and adds: 'We were unable to learn the reason of this; but they so strictly adhere to the practice, that, it is said, hunger will not drive them to deviate from it.' We further learn from Calder (Journ. 1873) that no fish, except shell-fish, 'would any native of Tasmania ever touch; whether it was from natural aversion or superstition, in not known; but scale-fish of any kind' was an abomination to the entire race. This taboo of male or female wallaby, as the case may be, may probably be akin to simialr taboo practised by totemistic uncivilized races only. With regard to the Tasmanians, we do not appear to have any indications of totemism."

"With regard to European food Cook says: 'When some bread was given them, as soon as they understood it was to be eaten, they returned or threw it away, without tasting it' (Third Voy. Bk. I. ch. vi. p. 39). On one occasion La Billardière's party left them some ships' food, and he thus reports the result: 'It appeared that they had made use of the bread and water which had been left for them on the preceding day; but the smell of the cheese had probably given them no inclination to taste it, as it was found in the same condition in which it had been deposited' (ch. v. p. 225). Later on he tells us: 'We did not know to what to ascribe their repugnance to our viands, but they would taste none that we offered them. They would not even suffer their children to eat the sugar we gave them, being very careful to take it out of their mouths the moment they were going to taste it' (II. ch. x. p. 47)."

1: Roth--98-99 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 262

"During the war, according to Mr. O'Connor (Colonies and Slaves, p. 55): 'The chief thing they want is bread, and they prefer getting a sack of flour by robbing a hut to hunting oppossums.' And Thirkell says they 'were much pleased to get potatoes from the white people.' 'None of the sheep killed by the savages were eaten; spears were left in some of them' (Espre, p. 47); but this statement is not quite correct. 'They wantonly kill sheep, but never eat them' [99] (Brodribb, p. 52). 'The natives frequently have speared sheep, and if they were taught to skin them, would soon eat them' (O'Connor, Colonies and Slaves, p. 55)."

1: Roth--100-101 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 222, 262

"'When at Moulting Bay, ... we counted fifty-six black swans, in pairs.... Formerly, a tribe of aborigines resorted regularly to this neighbourhood, at this [101] season of the year, to collect swans' eggs' (Backhouse, p. 219). Speaking of the large white grubs, which were found in old dead or dying trees, Mrs. Meredith tells us, 'The aborigines eat them greedily and I have heard that some English people do so, and say they taste like nuts or almonds' (p. 232). Melville also says (p. 346): 'The wood grub was to them a great delicacy.' Davies mentions that (p. 414) 'A large white catepillar, about two inches in length, found in rotten wood and in the Banksia, together with the eggs of the large ants, are considered luxuries.'"

I: Roth--101 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 226, 262

"Although Holman (IV. ch. xii. p. 405) speaks of 'their expertness in spearing the finny tribe,' it appears most probable that they never touched scale fish. Melville (p. 346) certainly says: 'Those near the sea-shore lived almost entirely upon fish;' but then he makes in the context no reference to shell-fish, and from what follows he probably means the latter. Lloyd states most emphatically (p. 51): 'Throughout my hunting experience with the aborigines, I never saw them capture an edible fish excepting of the shelly species.' Collins, describing Bass's discoveries (ch. xv. p. 169), while speaking of the shell-mounds, says: 'No remains of fish were ever seen.' Rossel (I. ch. iv. p. 56), speaking likewise of the mounds, says: 'We perceived, moreover, no débris of fishes;' but La Billardiére says (II. ch. xi. p. 77): 'They acquainted us that they lived upon fish as well as the other inhabitants of Cape Diemen.' The reader will notice that La Billardiére does not say they lived on fish, only that they said they did. Cook reports (Third Voy. Bk. I. ch. vi. p. 39): 'They also refused some elephant fish, both raw and cooked.' And, finally, in describing the settlement at Flinders Island, Calder says (Journ. p. 16): 'Of shell fish there were few or none, and no other fish would any native of Tasmania ever touch...; they would rather starve than eat it.'"

"We have above recorded La Billardière's and Ross's account of their meals, including a few words on their cooking. Of this art, Péron says (ch. xii. p. 226): 'The fire was lighted in an instant, ... the cooking was neither a long nor a tedious operation. The large shells were put on the fire, and there, as if on a dish, the animal cooked; it was then eaten without any other seasoning or preparation. On tasting shell-fish prepared in this way, we found them very tender and succulent.' On another occasion (ch. xii. p. 243) his party came upon 'fourteen huts or wind-shelters; ... several fires were still burning before these huts.... In front of them there were several bones of kangaroos and birds; and some flat stones warm and greasy, on which it seemed to me meat had been broiled.' Lloyd tells us (p. 51): 'The task of gathering and cooking the latter description of food devolved entirely upon the gins. The culinary arrangements of those children of nature were most primitive. They lived in happy ignorance of any cooking apparatus save the bright red embers engendered from the wood of their native [104] trees.' 'The manner of cooking their victuals is by throwing it on the fire, merely to singe off the hair' (Widowson, p. 190). 'They used to half cook the opossums whole' (Thirkell). Backhouse describes the cooking of limpets and bandicoots thus (p. 86): 'The bandicoot and limpets were cooked, the latter being pitched by the natives, with great dexterity, into the glowing embers, with the points of the shells downward: their contents, when

cooked enough, were taken out by means of a pointed stick.' 'Having thrown the carcase, without any preparation, upon the fire, when but just heated, the limbs were torn asunder, and devoured voraciously' (Dixon, p. 22). Only one settler testifies to the cleanliness of their cookery: 'They scrape their kangaroo and opossum very clean before they roast them' (O'Conner, p. 55)."

1: Roth--104-105 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 262, 175

"'By the considerable heaps of shells we met with from time to time, we judged that the ordinary food of the savages consisted of mussels, wing-shells, scallops, chama, and other similar shell-fish' (Marion, p. 34). Fourneaux follows with the remarks (Cook's Second Voy. Bk. I. ch. vii.): 'Landed with much difficulty, and saw several places where the Indians had been, and one they had lately left where they had a fire, with a great number of pearl-scallop [105] shells round it, ... with some burnt sticks and green boughs.... Mussel, pearl-scallop and cray-fish, I believe to be their chief food, though we could not find any of them;' and Anderson reported: 'But it was evident that shell-fish, at least, made a part of their food, from the many heaps of mussel-shells we saw in different parts' (Cook, Third Voy. Bk. I. ch. vii. p. 41)."

"After Anderson came Bass, who relates (Collins, ch. xv. p. 169): 'The large heaps of mussel-shells that were found near each hut proclaimed the mud banks to be a principal source of food.' He also mentions (ibid. p. 172), 'that having landed on an island off the north-east coast, "the whole of which wore an aspect of poverty," yet they found "this place was inhabited by men, as was shown by the old fireplaces, strewed round with the shells of the sea ear,"' and so also did Flinders (p. 165): 'Mussels were abundant, ... and the natives appeared to get oysters by diving, the shells having been found near their fireplaces.' La Billardière likewise noticed them (I. ch. v. p. 212), 'The heaps of shells which we found near the seashore showed that these savages derive their principal means of subsistence from the shell-fish which they find there.' Rossel, who was with La Billardière, remarks (I. ch. iv. p. 56), 'They appear to subsist upon shell-fish only, for large heaps of shells were found in the neighbourhood of places where they must have been living;' and Backhouse says (p. 348): 'At little Swan Port we visited the mounds of oyster-shells left by the aborigines, who formerly inhabited this country.... They must have been the accumulation of ages.'"

"It is, however, strange that we have been unable to find any reference to these shell-mounds in Péron, otherwise the testimony regarding the widespread nature of this food is universal. Mortimer mentions, that on Maria Island, they saw trees hollowed by fire, 'and great quantities of shells heaped about them' (p. 17). Mrs. Meredith thus describes the mounds: 'Enormous quantities of dead [oyster] shells are found, forming large banks, forty feet high, on two low isthmuses, one of which unites the two groups of the Schouten Mountains, and the other joins the northernmost of these with the mainland. Similar banks are also found at Little Swan Port.... After high winds, both live and dead shells are thrown up on the two former shell banks, but not on any other beach in the vicinity. This having doubtless been the case for centuries, the aboriginal inhabitants would be accustomed to resort thither for the oysters, and very probably added to the shells thus naturally collected.... They would convey the oysters to the nearest shore for the purpose of eating them, ...[106]and the banks there would gain perpetual additions from their ample repasts.... In Little Swan Port, beds of living oysters now exist, and on the adjacent shore are high banks of shells; ...but there is no surf or "wash" in the still waters of this estuary, to cast up shells, so that, unless the one kind of "natives" consumed the other to such an extent as to account for the accumulation, the banks must have been upraised from the sea.... At East Bay Neck, a low isthmus between Tasman's Peninsula and the mainland, large banks of cockle-shells appear, in the same manner as

those of oysters at Swan Port, at about four or five yards above high-water mark, and are now overgrown with grass and rushes' (pp. 137-140)."

(No date) 1890

Tasmanians

"Lloyd, who spent thirty-three years in the Colony, referring to the early days of settlement, says (pp. 78-79): 'In those primitive times, almost every particle of lime used in the colony was obtained by burning oyster-shells, firmly knit beds of which were discovered on the bay shores of my uncle's farm, to the extent of one chain (twenty-two yards) from high-water mark, and varying in depth from six to eight feet, imbedded in rich black sandy loam.... On closely examining the oyster-shells, there was nothing to indicate their having been thrown up by any volcanic agency or extraordinary action of the sea; on the contrary, they were promiscuously mixed together like to those opened at an oyster-eating rendezvous; thus affording, in my humble opinion, incontrovertible evidence that Tasmania has been peopled from time immemorial; and many other places along the shores of that colony exhibit the same proof in support of such a suggestion.... The banks wherein those large deposits of shells were found are fifteen to twenty feet above the level of the sea; and many an oyster-roasting feast have I gladly joined in with the natives, on those very spots whereon their ancestors must have revelled in like réunions for ages past.'"

116, 175, 262

"Ronald Gunn was the first to undertake a scientific examination of these shell mounds. He reports (II. pp. 332-335), 'The aborigines of Tasmania appear at all times to have derived a considerable portion of their food from the sea; ... the testaceae and crustaceae constituted the principal and almost only supply they drew from that element.... In cooking, the shells appear in all instances to have been merely roasted in the simplest manner, as I never could trace any indications of ovens, or stones arranged to be heated ... In the majority of cases, they consumed their food as near as possible to the fishing stations; occasionally going a little inland to avail themselves of a spring or stream of water. [107] I have, however, observed in a great number of instances, that there were unusually large accumulations of shells on projecting points, headlands and places commanding extensive views--even where not apparently the most eligible for cooking; whence I have supposed that they adopted these sites for their repasts, to protect themselves from the sudden attacks of hostile tribes.... Heaps and mounds of shells, of sizes varying from what might be supposed to be the débris of a family dinner to accumulations several feet in thickness, and many yards across, abound on all our shores, and upon every indentation of the coast; the species of which these heaps are composed varying according to locality. ... On the estuary of the Derwent these remains are found for several miles above Hobart Town, towards New Norfolk, until they disappear altogether at about three

miles from the latter town. On the Tamar they are found at still less distance from the sea; and it does not appear that the aborigines at any time were in the habit of carrying their shell-fish many miles inland; the farthest I have observed being two to three miles."

1: Roth--107 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 136, 262

"The principal kinds of Testaceae used by the aborigines as food were two species of Haliotis (H. tuberculata? and laevigata), which both attain a large size.... They were removed from the rocks (to which they closely adhere) by means of a wooden spatula-shaped instrument.... The Mussel (Mytilus sp.) ... is very common on the Derwent, on the Tamar, the north-west coast, etc.... The heaps on the Derwent and Tamar consist principally of this shell. Oysters (Ostrea sp.): these are now rather scarce in many places where their remains are abundant. The Warrenah (Turbo sp.), which is very common in many situations, seems to have been a very favourite article of food. At Cape Grim there is a heap, several feet in thickness, of this shell, formed on the top of the Cape. Limpets Patellae sp.): on the south and west coasts, these attain to a very great size. Fasciolaria trapezium: this shell I saw principally in the small heaps on the north coast; it is there abundant. A species of Purpura occurs occasionally in the heaps near Circular Head. A species of Cardium, and some of the smaller bivalves, were used on the Derwent, where these shells are common.... The period of time which has elapsed since the shells were removed from the sea (in most cases the latest must be upwards of thirty years), joined to their partial calcination by the aborigines in roasting, has caused their decomposition to be considerable."

1: Roth--108 [3] (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 222, 252, 262, 824

"As was to be expected of a race in their condition, the Tasmanians appear to have availed themselves largely of the edible vegetable productions which abounded in their island. La Billardière noticed that they made use of fern roots, sea weeds, fungi, etc. (II. ch. v. p. 235; ch. x. p. 14; ch. x. p. 50). The sea-wrack (Fucus palmatus) they broiled, and when it was softened to a certain point, they tore it to pieces to eat it, ... and the ficoides they eat without preparation. Rossel also refers (I. ch. iv. p. 99) to the fern roots eaten by the natives;..."

1: Roth--108-109 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians-1
116, 222, 262, 824

"... Melville says: 'And at certain seasons they procured, in great abundance, what is called the native bread, a kind of truffle' (p. 346). Gunn probably refers to this when he describes punk (I. p. 47): 'The large white fungus, called in the Colony "punk," which grows from the stringy bark, is said to have been been eaten when fresh by the aborigines.' Milligan, after describing their fish diet, continues: 'With these they mingled the core or pith of the fern trees, Cibotium Billardieri and Alsophila Australis (of which the former is rather astringent and dry for a European palate, and the latter, though more tolerable, is yet scarcely equal to a Swedish turnip); the young shoots of the Pteris esculenti, common ferns, as they emerge from the ground full of viscid mucous juice and various epiphytic fungi, of which one of the most important is that which grows on the Eucalypti, and is known, [109] when dry, under the name of Punk, and used as tinder in the Colony. Punk, when young, is nearly snow-white, soft, and to the taste insipid, with a distant flavour of mushroom; in this stage they eat it freely, either raw or slightly roasted. The Cyttaria of the myrtle tree, a small morelle-looking, honey-combed fungus, growing upon a fine pedicle, was a great favourite; but that which afforded the largest amount of solid and substantial nutritious matter was the native bread, a fungus growing in the ground, after the manner of the truffle, and generally so near the roots of the trees as to be reputed parasitical. Several mushrooms were also eaten by them; the onion-like leaves of some orchids, and the tubers of several plants of this tribe, were largely

consumed by them, particularly those of Gastrodi sessamoides, the native potato, so called by the colonists, though never tasted by them.... The green seed-vessels of Acacia sophora, A. maritima, and several others were eaten freely by them, after having been half-roasted by the fire; the amylaceous roots of the bulrush were roasted and eaten by them, together with the carrot-like roots of some small umbelliferae.. Of berries and fruits of which they partook, the principal were those of Solanum laciniatum, or kangaroo apple, when dead ripe, of Leucopogon gnidium and ericoides, of certain species of Coprosma, of the Gualtheria hispida, the Billardiera longiflora, of Cyathodes, etc. Besides these, the leaf of the larger kelp, whenever it could be obtained, was eagerly looked for and greedily eaten, after having undergone a process of roasting and maceration in fresh water, followed by a second roasting, when, though tough....it is susceptible of mastication' (Beacon, pp. 26-28)."

1: Roth--109 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 262, 824

"Another account says (Proc. Roy. Soc. Van Diemen's Land, I. p. 164), 'The pith in the uppermost part of the column of a young and vigorous Alsophila is soft and succulent, and, as compared with that from the common Tasmanian fern tree (Cibotium Billardieri), is devoid of astringency, and has a bland sweetish taste. The pith of both tree ferns was formerly eaten in a half-roasted state by the aborigines, but that from the Alsophila was preferred. Their maxim was, that the pith of the Cibotium must be eaten along with the flesh of the kangaroo, etc.; while that from the Alsophila was considered so good that it might be partaken of alone.'"

"Backhouse records, 'We saw many of the tree ferns, with the upper portion of the trunk split and one half turned back. This had evidently been done by the aborigines to obtain the heart for food, but how the process was effected I could not discover. It must certainly have required consider-[110]able skill.' In the Appendix to his book he adds a list of native plants, from which we extract particulars of those made use of by the natives for purposes of food. 'Geranium parviflorum: the aborigines were in the habit of digging up the roots of this plant, which are large and fleshy, and roasting them for food. It was called about Launceston, Native carrot. This species is very widely distributed over the Colony, and is usually found in light loamy soil. Although we possess about sixty species of this [pea] family, exclusive of the Acaciae, none of them yield good edible seeds. The aborigines were in the habit of collecting the ripening pods of Acacia, Sophora, or the Boobialla, and, after roasting them in the ashes, they picked out the seeds and eat them. Orchidaceae: a number of plants of this family have small bulbous roots, which were formerly eaten by the aborigines. Xanthorrhoea australis? Grass tree: The base of the inner leaves of the grass-tree is not to be despised by the hungry. The aborigines beat off the heads of these singular plants by striking them about the tops of the trunks with a large stick; they then strip off the outer leaves and cut away the inner ones, leaving about an inch and a half of the white tender portion, joining the trunk; this portion they

eat, raw or roasted; and it is far from disagreeable in flavour, having a nutty taste, slightly balsamic. The most extensively diffused edible root of Van Diemen's Land is that of the Tara-fern. This plant greatly resembles Pteris aquilina, the Common Fern, or Brake of England.... The Tasmanian plant is Pteris esculenta, and is known among the aborigines by the name of Tara.... The root is not bulbous, but creeps horizontally, at a few inches below the surface of the earth, and where it is luxuriant, attains to the thickness of a man's thumb.... The aborigines roast this root in the ashes, peel off its black skin with their teeth, and eat it with their roasted kangaroo, etc., in the same manner as Europeans eat bread. Cybotium Billardieri, Tree Fern: The native blacks of the Colony used to split open about a foot and a half of the top of the trunk of the Common Tree-fern, and take out the heart, a substance resembling the Swedish turnip, and of the thickness of a man's arm. This they also roasted in the ashes and eat as bread; but it is too bitter and astringent to suit an English palate. It is said the aborigines preferred the heart of another species of tree-fern, Alsophila australis, found at Macquarie Harbour and in other places on the northern side of Van Diemen's Land. Mylitta Australis, Native Bread: this species of tuber is often found in the Colony, attaining to the size of a child's [111] head; its taste somewhat resembles boiled rice. Like the heart of the Tree-fern, and the root of the native potato, cookery produces little change in its

character. On asking the aborigines how they found the native bread, they universally replied, "A Rotten Tree."' Gunn says the Mesembryanthemum aequilaterale (pig faces) is the canagong of the aborigines: 'The pulp of the almost shapeless, but somewhat ob--conical, fleshy seed vessel of this plant is sweetish and saline' (I. p. 48), and Gell also refers to this (ibid. II. p. 323). Lists of plants that could have been used for food by the aboriginal Tasmanian natives have been made out, but it is not necessary to repeat them here."

1: Roth--114 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 224, 262, 481, 462

"'Adhering to the rocks... the Mutton-fish are met with abundantly. These are often taken in deep water by the native women, who dive for them, and force them from the rocks by means of a wooden chisel. They put them into an oval bag, and bring them up suspended round their necks' (Backhouse, p. 103). The same author continues, on another occasion: 'In the afternoon we went... on a fishing excursion.... Some of the women went into the water among the large sea-tangle, to take crayfish. These women seem quite at home in the water, and frequently immerse their faces to enable them to see objects at the bottom. When they discover the object of their search, they dive, often using the long stems of the kelp to enable them to reach the bottom; these they handle as dexterously in descending as a sailor would a rope in ascending' (Backhouse, p. 168)."